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## THE EQUESTRIAN STATUES OF GATTAMELATA AND COLEONI.

Witnesses of the Italian Renaissance Pageant, which the Art Institute School and the united artists' societies produced in Blackstone Hall this winter, will recall how finely the two tall bronzed statues of famous Venetian captains framed the historical tableaux, placed right and left of the Romanesque façade of the abbey church of Charlieu as they were. These heavy monuments have been returned to their permanent locations without injury. The moment is a good one to remember how high a place both statues occupy in the story of modern sculpture. Donatello's authorship is certificate enough to the merit of our recent acquisition, the portrait of General Gattamelata. John Ruskin said of the other: "I do not believe there is a more glorious work of sculpture existing in the world than the equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Coleoni."

Both statues are, moreover, the first and the only early Renaissance sculpture of this character. Before Donatello, Paolo Uccello had indeed painted a large equestrian figure of Sir John Hawkwood in monochrome fresco, on an inside wall of the cathedral at Florence, and Castagno another of Niccola da Tolentino. But the one plastic rival of the two Venetian statues, in Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, is Lionardo's legendary lost plaster model of a similar creation. The master spent twenty years on it without completing his design. King Louis XII's soldiers smashed Lionardo's unfinished work in 1499. We have the same ruffians to thank for ruining his great painting of the *Last Supper*, in the same city of Milan.

When Donatello received the Venetian Signoria's commission to execute an equestrian monument of Gattamelata at Padua, soon after the general's death in that city in

1443, his only models in plastic form, outside of nature, were antique Greek and Roman sculptures. The bronze horses of St. Mark, being the authentic remnant of a classical Greek quadriga once erected at Chios,



COLEONI -Detail.

and captured by Doge Dandolo at Constantinople in 1204, could not fail to win Donatello's attention. He has followed that model much closer, in his Gattamelata, than the Roman equestrian portrait of Marcus Aurelius at Rome. His horse is a pacer like the St. Mark steeds, and has its mane roached in the Greek fashion. Some claim that the antique head of a horse in the Uffizi Gallery was Donatello's director model; but Müntz considers that bronze, with good reason, to be Donatello's own preliminary study for the Gattamelata.

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## THE PAGEANT OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE.

The Pageant, given under the auspices of the "Antiquarians of the Art Institute" in Blackstone Hall, January 26 and 27, was not only profoundly impressive as a spectacle, but was also a remarkable evidence of the co-operation and unity of purpose existing among the artists and art lovers of Chicago. It is unfortunate that no adequate photographic record could be made of the scenes and settings, but the lines and action are available in the Book of Words, and a brief description of the undertaking may be of assistance to the interested student of the period. The pageant was, in form, a chronicle play in twelve scenes, and not a mere scheme of tableaux or processions. There were in all more than seventy speaking parts, the greater number of which were taken by students of the Art School, while twelve were taken by members of the Donald Robertson Company, and a number by the Chicago Society of Artists and artists visiting the city.

For the production, a stage was constructed at the South end of Blackstone Hall; an auditorium seating about eight hundred people was built; the great cast of the Charlieu doorway was moved to serve as a background, the statues of Coleoni and Gattamelata were symmetrically placed at the sides of the stage, and three very large drop curtains, representing in a composite way Fiesole, Rome and Venice, were painted. An electrical equipment, allowing of a complete variety of light effects, was installed, and the hall was appro-

priately decorated. The resultant setting was magnificent in scale and extremely rich in effect.



COLEONI IN BLACKSTONE HALL (See p. 61.)

About eight hundred persons in costume took part, the final procession requiring fifteen minutes to pass across the stage in double file. The spirit of the performers may be judged

Donatello's rider is a Greek or a Roman imperator. The statue has little of an Italian condottiere but the marshal's baton and the portrait features. Falconnet's Peter the Great and Tuillon's Emperor Frederick illustrate the same propensity for the garb and gesture of classical antiquity in XVIII and XX century artists.

Gattamelata himself was a true Italian soldier of fortune. M. Henry Rousseau has published brief critical biographies of Gattamelata and Coleoni, in the Bulletin of the Royal Museums at Brussels, which we gladly draw upon for a glimpse of their careers and characters. The marshal's father was a baker in the castle Due Santi near Narni, and bore the name of Marzi. The son's given name is less certain. Different writers call him Erasmo, Francesco, Giovanni, and Stefano da Narni. As a soldier he possessed audacity, swiftness, sangfroid, and a certain feline slyness. His men proudly nicknamed him "the honey cat," italice *la gatta melata*, and the sobriquet stuck to him.

The Venetians engaged Narni to fight Filippo Maria Visconti in 1434. The Milanese general, Piccinino, trapped Narni's force in Brescia four years later, laying Venice open to a Milanese attack. But the honey cat captain made a cat's paw march around the north end of Lake Garda and reappeared, most unexpectedly, at Verona. The Venetian Senate gave him a marshal's baton, a title of nobility, and the freedom of Venice for this exploit. The Republic recognized his later service of expelling the Milanese from Venetian territory by voting him a bronze statue at Padua. Donatello completed the extant monument in 1453, ten years after Gattamelata's death.

Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti of Milan exiled Bartolommeo Coleoni's father, a promi-

nent Guelf partisan of Bergamo, and held his mother a prisoner at Sforza. Bartolommeo saw the light there in 1400. The boy became a page of Filippo d'Arcello, tyrant of Piacenza. At twenty he enlisted under Braccio da Montone. Coleoni betrayed his command of 800 Venetian horse to the Milanese general Piccinino about 1430. In 1447 he commands the army of the short-lived Milanese Republic. One year later, he fights the pretender, Sforza, under the banner of St. Mark. But it was Coleoni commanded the Venetian force that helped Sforza to the ducal throne of Milan. In 1451, the Council of Ten tried to put Coleoni out of the way for disloyalty. In 1454 it recalled and appointed him generalissimo of the Venetian Republic for twenty-five years. Coleoni served nearly the whole of this term out, operating principally against the Milanese as Gattamelata did. He died at his own castle of Malpaga near Bergamo in 1475, bequeathing a large, dubiously acquired fortune to Venice upon condition of the Signoria's erecting him an equestrian monument. He was the builder, also, of the exquisite Cappella Coleoni at his native Bergamo. The painter Verrocchio was engaged to execute the statue, but had only begun the horse when a mortal illness overtook him. Alessandro Leopardi, (the author by the way of the three beautiful flagpole standards of Morea, Candia and Cyprus in front of St. Mark's church) finished and signed both mount and man twenty years after Coleoni's death, in 1496, and perched the group on its tall, gracefully designed neo-Roman pedestal in 1498. His signature is engraved on the animal's surcingle: ALEXANDER LEOPARDVS V(otum) F(ecit) OP(us).

The sober decorative detail and the proportions of the high gray plaster pedestals

which support the bronzed casts of the two Venetian generals in Chicago have been assimilated. A close view of both statues is gained from the balcony, and the Coleoni presents a forceful foreshortened silhouette, sharply detailed upon the light ground of a large window, to the approaching visitor. The almost Gothic vehemence of Leopardi's horseman contrasts noticeably with the classical calm of the earlier sculptor's man and horse. Modern sculptors and turfmen have been heard to deny any great naturalism to either statue; but few contemporary works equal them in the subtler essence of a designer's craft which constitutes monumentality and style.

A. E.

A group of forty-six etchings by a new process, the work of the inventor, Ozias Dodge, has been shown in the print room during February and March. The work is interesting from a technical point of view, as well as for its artistic value. The process is one by which a drawing, made directly on a specially prepared celluloid film, is transferred to a copper plate and etched, to be printed by the ordinary method of printing etchings. The results show a resemblance to lithographs or soft-ground etchings, rather than to the usual work of the needle, and the drawings so treated by Mr. Dodge are free and charming in quality. It is somewhat doubtful if the process will ever come into very general use, though it has pronounced advantages in convenience over the lithographic method.

There has been installed in the East Corridor a collection of medals and plaques by Victor D. Brenner, purchased from the exhibition of American Artists, last autumn. A number of modern French medals, by Alexandre Charpentier, F. Vernon, and E. Dropsy have also been placed with the collection previously shown.

The Trustees of the Institute have lent to the South Park Commissioners an exhibition of twenty-four paintings belonging to the permanent collection, for use as a travelling exhibit in the park recreation rooms. The itinerary for this year includes eight of the smaller parks and squares, in districts remote from the Institute, at each of which the pictures are hung and catalogued, and remain on exhibition for one week. The plan provides a use for some works for which the permanent galleries do not provide room enough at present. The current exhibit has been shown at the following parks and squares: Mark White Square, Armour Square, Sherman Park, Cornell Square, Davis Square, Ogden Park, Bessemer Park, Palmer Park.

The Public School Art Society, during the month of February, hung part of the long East corridor with framed pictures recently purchased to be placed in the A. A. Libby School and the Deaf Department of the Cook County Normal School. Good reproductions of paintings and decorations, photographs of statuary, lithographs and various color prints were shown. The exhibit gave some idea of the care taken in the selection of pictures bought for the schools, as well as the scale on which the Society is working. This year, too, the Society is beginning to place original mural decorations, two of which, designed for the Albert G. Lane Technical High School, are being painted in competition by the advanced students of the Art Institute School.

In the annual exhibition of the Artists of Chicago in February, eighty-eight former students of the Art Institute exhibited pictures or sculptures.